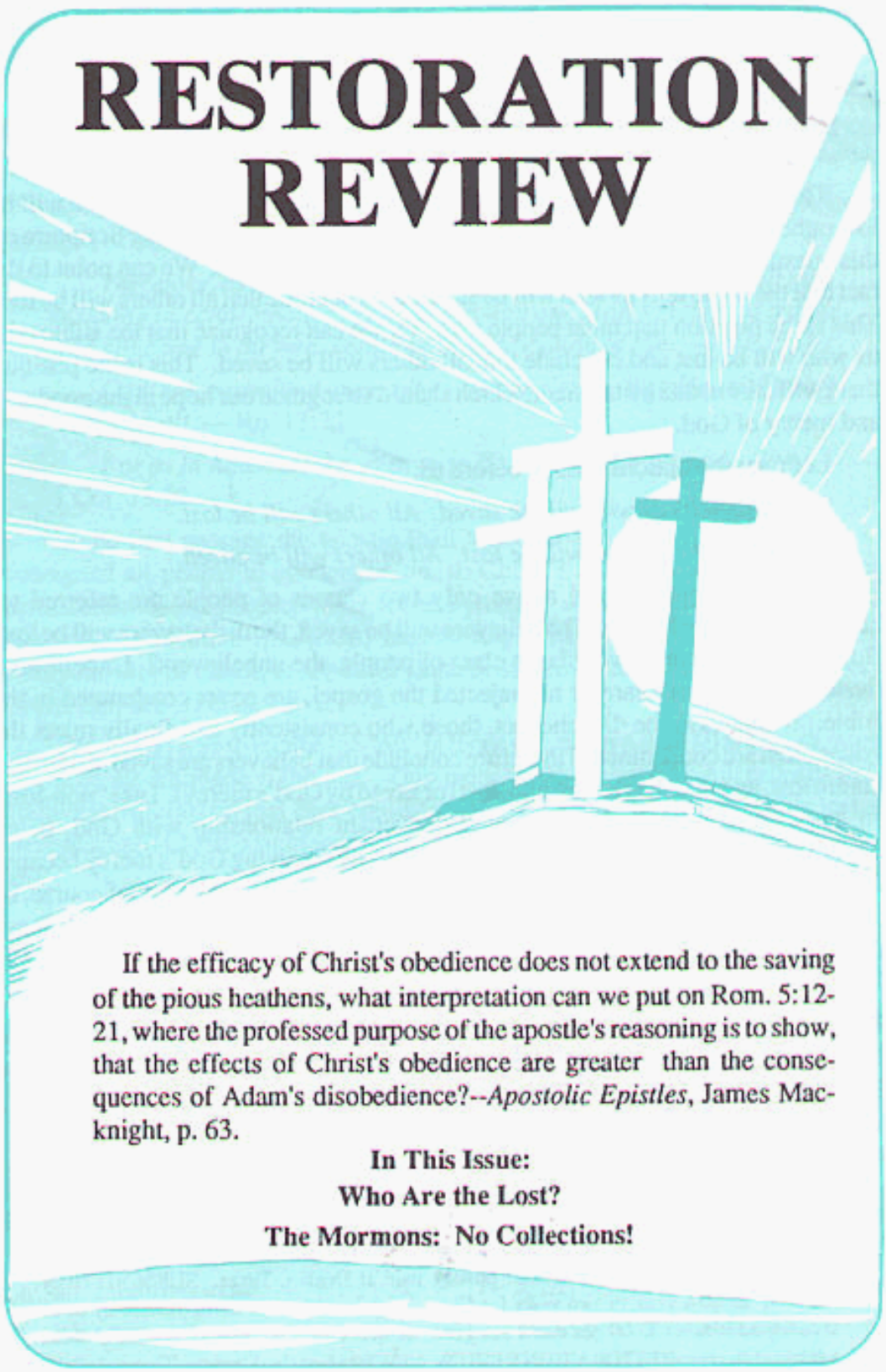
RESTORATION REVIEW



If the efficacy of Christ's obedience does not extend to the saving of the pious heathens, what interpretation can we put on Rom. 5:12-21, where the professed purpose of the apostle's reasoning is to show, that the effects of Christ's obedience are greater than the consequences of Adam's disobedience?--*Apostolic Epistles*, James Macknight, p. 63.

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Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 9, November 1989

WHO ARE THE LOST?

He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. He who disbelieves shall be damned.—Mk. 16:16

The point of this article is that we should allow the Bible to tell us who will be lost rather than to take that judgment upon ourselves. In approaching Scripture on this question there are two possible positions that we can take. We can point to the fact that the Bible tells us who will be saved and conclude that all others will be lost. This is the position that most people take. Or we *can* recognize that the Bible tells us who will be lost and conclude that all others will be saved. *This* is the position that I will take in this installment, which should strengthen our hope *in* the goodness and mercy of God.

Let's set the options clearly before us:

The Bible tells us who will be saved. All others will be lost.

The Bible tells us who will be lost. All others will be saved.

In the Scripture quoted above only two classes of people are referred to, believers and disbelievers. The believers will be saved, the disbelievers will be lost. But how about another very large class of people, the unbelievers? Unbelievers, those who have not heard or not rejected the gospel, are never condemned in the Bible. It is always the disbelievers, those who consistently and finally reject the gospel, that are condemned. I therefore conclude that believers are saved, disbelievers are lost, and unbelievers are non-lost (or saved by God's mercy). I use "non-lost" so as to distinguish between being in covenant relationship with God, being Christians and members of the Body of Christ, and receiving God's mercy because of an inability or lack of opportunity to believe. Unbelievers will not, of course, be saved as Christians but because they are non-lost, that is, they are not among those that the Bible says are lost.

The Bible nowhere says or implies that everyone is lost except those that the Bible says will be saved. In our missionary zeal we often assert that the multiplied millions on some vast continent are lost because they are not among those that the Bible says are saved. We do not stop to think what kind of God we are advocating when we say such things. Does the God of

heaven, who is full of compassion and love, condemn untold millions to hell for not believing what they have had no opportunity to believe, or for not obeying what they did not know to obey? Does a just God exact of a person that which he has had no chance of doing?

It is a fact of Scripture: It is always the disbeliever who is condemned, never the unbeliever. It is the one who persistently and finally rejects the light of God who is lost, never the one who has had no chance to see the light.

Another way to look at this is in reference to these three rather neglected passages of Scripture:

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men1 resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.— Ro. 5:18

God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.— Ro. 11:32

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. -1 Cor. 15:22

In the first passage the apostle Paul makes it clear that just as Adam's sin consigned all people to condemnation, so Christ's act of righteousness brought justification to all people. The second passage states plainly that God made everyone disobedient (in Adam) that he might have mercy on all (in Christ). Everyone dies in Adam, or are made sinners, according to the third passage, but in Christ they are all made alive.

There is no way to escape the "all" in these verses. In Adam all are condemned; in Christ all are made righteous. This means that because of Adam's sin those countless millions on that dark continent (along with all the rest of us) are lost, or were lost until Christ's righteous act of dying on the Cross saved them and saved us all.

So, because of these passages we can affirm two things. All people are sinners (because of Adam's sin). All people are saved from their sins (because of Christ's righteous act).

We could leave it that way and rejoice in the universal salvation of all mankind. But there are other truths in Scripture that force us to conclude that there are some who will be lost. These are the disbelievers, those who persistently and finally reject God's grace when it is offered to them. This is evident from Mk. 16:16: *those who disbelieve will be condemned.* There are numerous verses like Jn. 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Such

truths show that not everyone will be saved. Some will be lost, which means there is an exception to the "all" passages referred to above. Everyone will be saved except those who disbelieve.

This means that our missionary message to that dark continent can go this way: God has saved you through Jesus Christ. Will you accept it? Those who are the elect will accept it and confirm their salvation. Those who reject it confirm that they are not of the elect and will be lost. But the free choice is theirs to make. If they reject the gospel, which they could accept, they are lost.

This is a different message from the bad news that is often given: Everyone is lost and in sin, so you must believe and obey to escape God's wrath. But the gospel is good news, not bad news. The good news is that God has saved everyone through Christ. One only needs to accept it by believing and obeying. Only those who reject the message will be lost.

So a passage like Ro. 11:32 means that God will have mercy upon all— except those who persistently, repeatedly, and finally reject him. We put it that way because they may at first reject the gospel, as we know many do, but finally accept it. Only when *one finally* rejects the gospel is he lost. God is longsuffering. He is willing to wait, wait, and wait for one to accept him, for he is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to the truth. But some will not. Those who are persistently disobedient will be lost. Everyone else will be saved.

We may think of the saved and lost in reference to baptism. Mk. 16:16, quoted above, says that those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. We may conclude that those who are unbaptized are lost. But this does not follow. It is better to say that those who refuse to be baptized and thus reject the gospel are lost. There are millions that are unbaptized because they have never even heard of baptism. It is rejecting God that condemns people, not being ignorant of God, unless indeed it be a willful ignorance. Willful ignorance is a form of rebellion and rejection.

An immediate response to this thesis is that if it is only disbelievers that will be lost why take the gospel to the unbelievers of the world, for in preaching to them you only run the risk of making disbelievers of them? Leave them in their unbelief and they will be saved!

This is an understandable objection, but it implies an unacceptable view of the nature of God: that God is going to condemn people to hell for not believing when they had no chance to believe. So the one who raises this objection has the serious problem of believing in an unjust God. The objection also fails to recognize the gospel as God's means of calling those he has elected to be his children.

We are to preach the gospel to all nations and to all people not only because it is God's will that we do so but because this is how God calls his elect ones. Those who become believers are the elect; those who reject the gospel are the nonelect. Notice how Paul connects election (or calling) with the gospel. In 1 Thess 1:4 he says to the church, "knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God," and in the next verse refers to the gospel coming to them "in power and in the Holy Spin L" Then to the same church he says in 2 Thess. 2:13 that "God from the beginning chose you for salvation," and then in the next verse he says "God called you by our gospel."

God knew already (even from the beginning) who would be saved and who would be lost at Thessalonica. He sent them the gospel so as to confirm this. The elect heard the gospel and obeyed it and were saved; the nonelect heard but rejected and were lost. And yet each one was free to accept or reject. It is simply that God knew from the beginning what they would do. God calls or elects through the gospel. Anyone can become one of God's elect by believing and obeying the gospel. Those that reject the gospel confirm that they are not of the elect.

Another instance of this is when the Lord appeared to Paul while he was in Corinth in order to keep him in that city, telling him to "Speak and do not keep silent," and then told him "for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10). God had already elected them and they were already in a sense God's people, but this was to be confirmed by their believing and obeying the gospel. Those in Corinth who rejected Paul's preaching confirmed that they were the nonelect.

Too, we should not think of taking the gospel to people just to keep them out of hell, assuming that is their destiny. Even if I knew a man would escape hell in his unwillful ignorance of the gospel, I would want him to know our blessed Lord and to grow in the grace of God. The purpose of the gospel is not as much to keep people out of hell as it is to bring them into the fellowship of Christ and the joy of the Holy Spirit both in this world and the world to come. God has a plan for every person which will extend into all eternity, but it begins in this world with the good news of Jesus Christ.

We are also to realize that even when unbelievers have not heard the gospel they are not without some light from God. John 1:9 says he gives light to every person born into the world. Acts 14:17 shows that God never leaves himself without witness, and in Ro. 2:14 Paul refers to Gentiles "who do not have the law, by nature do the things contained in the law." He speaks of "the law written in their hearts," to which their consciences bear witness, "accusing or excusing them."

It appears that the apostle speaks of the light that is within each person and in nature—moral conscience, natural law, innate light, or however one might express it. There is therefore "the principle of available light" by which each person is judged. The gospel is the full

radiance of God's light as revealed in Jesus Christ. But those who may never be exposed to gospel light nonetheless have some light. This is why Paul condemns those in Ro. 1:21 who "although they knew God they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." These are condemned not because they rejected the gospel (which they had not heard) but because they had rejected the knowledge of God that they had in nature and in their consciences. They knew better than to "worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator" (verse 25), but they did so anyway. This made them disobedient to the light they had and therefore lost.

But the apostle finds others who do in their hearts the things the law requires, and these will receive "glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good" (Ro. 2:9). So, in a way we already have "believers" and "disbelievers" among those people who are unevangelized in that they have already received or rejected what light they have. This is another reason to take the gospel to them, for those who have responded to the lesser light of the law of nature will surely respond to the greater light of the gospel and thus be confirmed as God's elect. And there may be some, even among those whom "God gave up to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts" (Ro. 1:24), who will be moved by the power of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel, and at last become God's elect. It is only those who persistently and finally reject the gospel (or whatever other light they have) that will be lost.

It should strengthen our hope to realize that our great and merciful God never leaves himself without witness in that he gives at least some light to every person born into this world. And he judges them on the basis of the light they have, "according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." And our heavenly Father is abundant in mercy and longsuffering. His mercy is so overflowing that he saves everyone through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ— everyone, that is, except those who persistently and finally reject him. Even for these he keeps on waiting.

"Because your mercy is better than life, my lips shall praise you" (Ps. 63:3). —*the Editor*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 9, November 1989

THE WORLD'S SQUEEZE PLAY

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity. — Ro. 12:2 (Phillips)

Basketball teams have what they call a squeeze play. Military commanders have also been known to put the "squeeze" on their enemy, at sea as well as on land. Predatory animals also use this tactic. When such a maneuver is properly executed, it is very difficult for the prey to escape. Phillips' rendition of this passage recognizes that the world is one vast "squeeze play" for the Christian. The world is out to fence us in and to do us in. It not only pushes and shoves but it seeks to get a vice grip on us. It intends to squeeze us into its own mold.

The world does this through a vast arsenal of weapons, "carnal weapons" Paul would call them, but they are crafty, deceitful, and alluring. Sin is attractive to the eye and appealing to the ego. The world's squeeze play feeds upon human vanity. It is easy for us to lose our way in seeking to be "men-pleasers," in spite of the warnings of Scripture. We all have a great need for approval and applause, and that is as it should be. The problem is that we seek approval at the wrong source, from men rather than from God. One of the noblest things said about our Lord was that "Even Christ did not please Himself" (Ro. 15:3). It is neat the way Paul says that. If anyone should please himself it would be Christ, but even he chose to please God rather than himself. One of the ignoblest things said of anyone in Scripture was said of the Jewish rulers who actually believed in Christ but they would not confess it' lest they be cast out of the synagogue, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (Jn. 12:43).

This is why the world has us in a squeeze play, *we don' t want to be cast out of the synagogue!* There are "synagogues" all around us that are ready to do us in if we do not fit the mold. It begins when we are kids in school and it never lets up right down to the office, factory, and church. There is always the demand to conform, to fit the mold that the world cuts for us. It is so easy to yield to the pressure. There is always the demonic whisper, "One must get along; don't rock any boats." The world's ace card is its own alluring approval. Disapproval and rejection are too much for most of us, and to be shamed is understandably unbearable.

Most theologians recognize that this is the essence of the suffering of Christ, not the physical suffering of crucifixion as much as the shame of the Cross. He suffered the agony of rejection, not only from men but from God as well. Heb. 12:2 says it this way: "for the joy set before Him he endured the Cross, despising the shame."

Some of the references our Lord makes to the world may help us to deal with its squeeze play. Such as Jn. 16:33: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The world's squeeze play didn't work on Jesus. He was not deceived by its craftiness nor did he yield to its demands for conformity. We are to be like our Lord in reference to the world in that we are to think only in terms of overcoming it. He tells us how this is done: by being of good cheer in the face of hardship. We can be of good cheer because we have hope. It was "because of the joy set before him" that Jesus was invulnerable to the world's squeeze play.

Jesus also said of the world: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you" (Jn. 15:18). The world here is not the rank and file of people as much as the religious and political power brokers, "the System" that eventually condemned Jesus to the Cross. This system, which is inspired by the demonic forces of hell, will not tolerate nonconformity. It will hate and destroy anything or anyone that threatens its own existence. This is why the church itself, victimized by the System, will often hate and persecute its most Christ-like members on the pretext of their being heretics. Luther was no problem so long as the pope could brush his antics off as merely "a monk's quarrel." It was when he loomed as a threat to the System that the pope took action. This is what Jesus means by "the world," which is as religious as it is secular, and it is this that seeks to tighten the screws on all those who do not line up.

We overcome the world and escape its squeeze play by allowing God to renovate us from within. Phillips puts it this way: "let God remold your minds from within." The KJV renders it: "be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." This shows that our minds matter, and that if we yield to the working of God through the Holy Spirit within us we can have a "new mind" as the Jerusalem Bible puts it. While it is God who works within us "both to will and to do for His good pleasure," as Philip. 2:13 has it, there has to be effort on our part. That is why in the same context the apostle tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is not a matter of being afraid of God but of being awed by his power.

The world has the money, the power, the institutions, and the positions of influence. It also has the allurements of the flesh and the enticements of pleasure. It is well equipped to squeeze people into its mold. Each person has to decide where he will cast his lot. In combat with the world we are all disadvantaged except for one thing, resources from within. The renewed mind that is resolved not to be hoodwinked by the world's confetti will, like Jesus himself, overcome the world.

All this proves what nothing else can prove, that the plan of God for us is good, acceptable, and perfect. Or as Phillips has it: "so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity."

The pragmatic test of truth is the only one that stands up and walks. We can argue doctrine for an eternity and still prove nothing. The world has no argument against a renewed mind and a changed life. That is a great phrase in Phillips' rendition — "that you may prove in practice." When the proof is there in the form of a changed life, the world has no power to apply its squeeze play. It may hate, persecute, and even seek to destroy, but it can't win.— *the Editor*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 9, November 1989

Visiting Other Churches: New Series, No.9...

THE MORMONS: NO COLLECTIONS!

Since there are so many peculiarities about the Mormons it may appear odd referring to them as the church that has no collections, but this is a distinction that impresses me. Of all the 70-odd churches I have visited in Denton the Mormon wards (congregations) are the only ones that did not pass a collection plate. This is not to say that they are indifferent toward money, for they are among the few churches that teach and practice tithing, and they may be the most "money wise" of all denominations. But the Mormon church is no place for anyone who is interested in making a living in church work, for no one is paid for any service in the Mormon church except some positions at headquarters in Salt Lake City.

One can see the members handing an envelope to one of the bishop's counselors, who take care of financial matters, leaving the bishop free to care for spiritual needs. This is his or her tithe which may be for a week or a month or longer. The counselors make out a deposit slip each Sunday evening, call Salt Lake City and report the amount of the deposit. When the money is deposited at the local bank on Monday morning it is immediately electronically transferred to Salt Lake City. The members never see the money again and have no voice as to how it is spent. And yet when their imposing stake center opened here in Denton, where two of the wards meet regularly, it was all paid for in cash by headquarters before they ever opened the doors. The only people the local wards hire are janitors, and even their checks come from Salt Lake City. The only money that remains local is the bishop's budget which is for charity and miscellaneous items.

The members do not select the bishop (same as pastor in other churches) who presides over their ward nor his counselors (deacons). They are nominated by the stake (diocese or district) president and are appointed by the First Presidency in Salt Lake City. The ward has no veto power. The Mormon church is hardly a democracy, even though they highly prize democratic principles as very loyal Americans. The whole church is ruled by twelve apostles. The Reorganized Mormons, a separate church with headquarters in Independence, Mo., also have twelve apostles. Each group of apostles considers the other apostate. One of my anti-Mormon friends said he agreed with both of them!

The Mormons are phenomenal in raising money, which is often for charitable causes. They will periodically call for a church-wide day of fasting and almsgiving for some particular cause. On one occasion they raised $12,000,000 for the American Red Cross for relief purposes, which is the largest contribution the Red Cross ever received. Such things are often done quietly and are not reported to the press.

A visitor to the service of a Mormon ward would not notice any major difference from most other Protestant churches, except that they read from the Book of Mormon as well as the Bible. They do not have responsive readings from either book. He might suppose he was at a Baptist church or a Church of Christ (except for piano, organ, and violin!), but he would know that he was not at an Episcopal church! The Mormons are noisy, talkative, and very informal. I felt quite at home with all the noisy kids and in starting the service late. Even in a sacramental service, when Communion is served (each Sunday and with bread and water), their children sit with them. They have Sunday School for all ages, but when the ward gathers for worship the children are there. The Mormons are one of the most family-oriented of all churches. Their services reflect this.

They utilize their facilities better than most of us. Here in Denton there are four wards (about 700 members on the roles) meeting in two buildings. It is common for several wards to use the same facility, but each congregation is independent of the others, with their own organization and program. Each ward bishop is responsible to the stake president, who in turn reports to a regional office, which in turn is responsible to headquarters. A stake is made up of about ten wards with some 4,000 members. Stakes have their own programs, such as calling all wards to a stake center where they watch programs from Salt Lake City on closed circuit TV. A stake will also have a food and clothing center for the needy. The bishop of any ward can issue a permit to any needy person, Mormon or non-Mormon, with which he can go to the center and get what he needs. Mormons are widely respected for the way they care for their needy. Unlike our federal welfare system, they also prod their people to get off welfare by

going to work! But they see their own through an emergency, however long it may last. If the Mormons succeeded in converting all America we could close down the welfare department in Washington!

The Mormons are historically anti-black, anti-feminist, anti-ERA, and anti-gay, and they vote conservative Republican. By way of a comparatively recent divine revelation to the church's president the church is no longer officially anti-black. There is but one black family in the Denton wards, which is typical of all white churches in Denton, and the missionaries have recently begun to work among blacks.

While there is a gay-rights Mormon group, as in all denominations, it is not approved by the church. If a Mormon is found to be gay he is excommunicated unless he shows evidence of repentance. And yet the Mormons have quietly set up a therapy treatment center for gays designed to help them to restructure their life style. The church has also recently issued new guidelines for working with gays, a document held in confidence by the bishops.

The Mormons were so anti-ERA, from Salt Lake City to the local wards, that some politicians either credited or blamed them for killing the ERA Amendment. When I asked a bishop's counselor if they were sexist, he conceded that if sexist meant that they recognized the distinctions that God ordained then yes they were sexist. A woman cannot enter their priesthood, either Aaronic, the lower order, or the Melchizedek, the higher order. She cannot be an elder, a bishop, a counselor, and certainly not an apostle. She cannot baptize or serve Communion. A black male could *now* do all these things! Never sell the Mormons short on what revelation may come next in these days of women's liberation! If a revelation could deliver them from their historic practice of polygamy, the Mormon feminists are not exactly without hope.

And yet the Mormons are far ahead of many of us when it comes to women's ministry. In my several visits I have heard women give testimonials, lead the singing, play instruments, make reports, and even preach. Women sometimes plan and conduct the entire service, except to serve "the sacraments." At one ward recently a woman gave a testimonial on what her conversion to the Mormon church meant to her. She then sat down and began to hyperventil-ate. A doctor in the audience rushed to her side, but she died there on the front pew.

One service I attended was conducted entirely by girls 12-18 and their leaders, all older women. They are well-organized into age groups which bear them through the years on programs of spiritual improvement. They keep a journal of their progress in prayer, study, and good works, fulfilling their motto of "Stand for Truth and Righteousness." After six years of such development they go before the bishop for an interview. If he agrees that a girl is a

worthy "LDS Daughter" she is given a "Young Womanhood Recognition Award" and her name is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the church foyer. The entire service was given to the reports of these girls. There was no preaching at that service.

The girls are strongly urged to marry within their own church. This enables them to marry in the temple (There is now one in nearby Dallas), which seals them in matrimony for time and for eternity. If they marry a "Gentile" (Have you heard the old saw that Salt Lake City is the only place in the world where a Jew is a Gentile!) they are by no means disenfranchised in any way, and the bishop will perform and bless the marriage at the local ward. They are now under pressure to convert their husbands!

The Mormons have their problems just as the rest of us. They lose at least 40% of their converts in less than two years. Only half of those on a ward membership list attends church with any regularity. Only a minority of those are really "good Mormons" who fast (on special occasions and they skip two meals before taking Communion), tithe, conduct home devotionals, and abstain from tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee. A good Mormon family may send a son to Salt Lake City to train as a missionary, who then gives two years of his life either in home or foreign missions — at the expense of the family, not the church! Daughters may also now go out as missionaries even if they can't be elders. They are simply "sisters" who usually work among women on college campuses, in two's of course.

The Texas Fort Worth Mission, which supervises about 180 missionaries in our area has about 20 sisters. Such a mission reports directly to Salt Lake City. The Mormon elders who knock on your door will temporarily be a part of the local ward in your area, but they are responsible to a higher level of authority in the church. There are some 17,000 of these worldwide. They are highly esteemed in the ward where they are really visitors, and are often eyed by the girls who may dream of being married to one of them both on earth and in heaven. But eyeing is as far as it goes. No dating, no nothing, and no exceptions! I am suspicious that this is one more reason why the missionary-elders are constantly on the move. While they serve for two years, they stay at one place but a few months. One elder told me that his call to be a missionary interrupted his education at Brigham Young University (BYU). He will return to BYU and finish his education, but having served as a missionary will make him a super Mormon for life. He will also have a special place in the next world, and he will not have to wear dark suits and ride a bicycle.

The attitude of the church at large toward Mormons may be seen in a conversation I had with one of my old Princeton profs when I returned one year for a reunion. He had been invited to lecture on religion at BYU, and being a Presbyterian he was surprised they had invited him. When I said something about the Mormons deserving high marks in some areas, he responded with, "Yes, if they didn't have to believe so many crazy things." That is the

essence of Mormonism as viewed by many non-Mormons who have knowledge of Mormon history and theology, except that some go further and insist that they are apostate and anti-Christian.

I find it baffling that a Mormon scientist can really believe there was an ancient civilization in America with vast cities and an advanced culture long before Christ, when there isn't the slightest scientific evidence for it, archaeological or otherwise. And I am nonplused that intelligent people that the Mormons are can actually believe that the apostle John is still alive somewhere in the world today more than twice the age of Methuselah! What is so odd about this is that the source of this doctrine, Jn. 21:21-23, anticipates that some would interpret what Jesus said to mean that John would not die, so the apostle went out of his way to make it clear: "Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?'" (speaking to Peter).

And now they have to believe, according to an old letter that has turned up, written by one of Joseph Smith's associates and conceded by the church to be authentic, that it may have been a salamander who first appeared to the prophet instead of an angel!

Such beliefs are not just crazy. They are weird and cultish. The Mormons invite such problems when they claim new revelations and create extra Bibles.

I have a dear and highly intelligent friend, longtime a Church of Christ missionary, who knows more about the Mormons than any non-Mormon I know. Since his wife converted to Mormonism, he went along with her to church as well as to his own Church of Christ, and he has spent a large part of his life being with them and studying them. At one time he was so accepted by them that he preached in their services. They were all out to convert him also, and even arranged an audience for him with one of the apostles in Utah! He told me that the apostle was most gracious, but the moment he questioned a Mormon interpretation the interview abruptly ended. He at last told the Mormons plainly that their chances of converting him was absolutely nil, as much as he loved them, for he knew too much about their doctrine.

He told me two things about the Mormons that impressed me, prompted by my question as to whether they are really Christians, which most evangelical Christians seem to doubt. First, he said, they have the most inexcusable, indefensible theology of any church in Christendom, especially in reference to God, Christ, and the church. Second, he said, they are the most devoted, committed Christians he had ever known; they are better Christians than we are.

If we have to give the Mormons an F in theology, I am tempted to give them an A in practical religion. And if I graded those churches that are so judgmental of the Mormons, perhaps including my own, I would be tempted to use the same grades — in reverse order! It is just as well to let the Lord issue the report cards. But if we must be judgmental, let it be self-judgment.

So, when it comes to the Mormons, you can see what you want to see, the good or the bad. Visit with them in their own churches and decide for yourself. As for me I choose to see the good while not unmindful of the bad. One thing is evident, the Mormons make good friends, fine neighbors, and productive, law-abiding citizens. — *the Editor*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 9, November 1989

MAY THE DIVORCED REMARRY?

Cecil Hook

In discussions concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage, Paul's explanation in Rom. 7:1-3 has been both misunderstood and misused. From it some students conclude that there is no condition which makes divorce and remarriage acceptable. Other persons allow for divorce under certain conditions but they contend that a subsequent marriage would be sinful.

Let me direct your attention to a few points about this passage which often are overlooked. Sometimes we become so confused by our boggling explanations that we fail to see some of the plainest teachings.

In the RSV the passage reads: "Do you not know, brethren — for I am speaking to those who know the law — that the law is binding on a person only during his life? Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress."

Paul has much to say about the Law of Moses in Romans. In this setting he is using a point about marriage as an illustration. He is not stating all of the regulations that may pertain to marriage, but he is teaching that a Jew could accept Christ without disrespecting or violating the Law of Moses. That is simple enough until we get hung up on quibbles.

Under the law a woman could not divorce her husband; so, she was bound to him generally. Does that mean she could never be divorced with permission to remarry? It does not!

Paul was addressing "those who know the law." What did the law say? In Dt. 24:14 it clearly states that a man could give his wife a bill of divorce and send her out of his house. Thus she was freed from the man so that she could become the wife of another man. God put that provision in the law because of "your hardness of heart" (Mt. 19:3-9). In those times when a woman could hardly make her own way alone in their society, it would have been hard-hearted to drive her out with no permission to find another man to provide for her.

Did the law demand that she continue to consider herself to be that man's wife after he divorced her? No. Was she branded an adulteress when she married another man? No. Was her second union an unlawful situation rather than really being a marriage? No, for she became "another man's wife," not a live-in. Marriage partners do not commit adultery with one another.

Was this remarried woman living with, or married to, "another man while her husband is alive"? She was not! She had no husband at the time she became another man's wife. After her husband gave her a bill of divorce, he was no longer her husband. He is then referred to as her "former husband." He became an ex-husband from whom she was free with the privilege of becoming another man's wife.

If a husband found an "indecency" or an "unseemly thing" in his wife, he could divorce her, according to Dt. 24:14. Whether this was something genetic (kinship), bad manners, or immoral conduct, the cause for the divorce lay in her. Did this flaw in her make her the "guilty party"? Even though the grounds for the divorce were in her, upon being given a certificate of divorce by her husband, she became loosed from him and was free to become the wife of another man — the "guilty party" remarrying! "Knowing the law," Jesus was recognizing, explaining, and reinforcing this Mosaic passage in Mt. 19:3-9. "Knowing the law," Paul was not contradicting it.

Paul's illustration in Rom. 7 deals with bigamy or living with two men at one time. The woman already has one husband when she takes a second man to live with. Under the law a man could practice bigamy without committing adultery against his wife, but a woman did not

enjoy a comparable privilege. Paul states that "she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive," but if her husband dies, "and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress."

Divorce is not a factor discussed in this passage. The general concept of marriage is being used as an illustration to teach the Jews that one could accept Christ without violating another relationship with God through law.

Paul's explanation in Rom. 7:4-6 takes a surprising twist. We expect him to declare that the law was dead, but he does not! It is not the husband (law) that died to free the wife from the law of her husband. The wife died! "The law is binding on a person only during his life" (v.1). Under the law she could not put her husband away; so, she freed herself from him by dying while he yet lived! (Later, he who is "become obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" Heb. 8:13.) Paul had explained already in chapter 6 that the believers had died to law. They looked to law no more for justification, for "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

So, rather than giving a discourse on marriage here, Paul is assuring disciples that when they died with Christ for their justification they freed themselves from law as another source of it.

We should uphold all of God's law with fervor, but our zeal must not lead us to bind restrictions where God has not. The road to heaven has enough discouragements without having an extra yoke laid on us by well-meaning men. — *1350 Huisache, New Braunfels, Tx. 78130*

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RECOGNITION OF THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS (5)

W. Carl Ketcherside

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified. - Acts 2:36

Jesus was made Lord *for* us as well as *of* us. The first enables Him to bestow upon us every blessing we need as His citizens, the second to require obedience of us as willing subjects. Since the ultimate in blessing is eternal life, by being given all authority, including that over life and death, He can freely give us life. In His prayer for oneness He declares, "Thou has given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou has given Him."

The rule of Jesus is one of conquest. There are two great powers locked in unceasing combat. These are referred to as "the dominion of darkness" and "the kingdom of God's beloved Son" (Col. 1:13). While the earth is the present theater of war, all created beings in the universe are engaged in the strife. Not all of these are terrestrial beings, that is, flesh and blood. Some are celestial, others infernal. "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of the present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

Just as there is a hierarchy of unholy angels, so there is a hierarchy of holy angels. Thus Jesus has been given all authority in heaven, as well as on earth. He can direct the host of heaven, the legions of angels, in the titanic conflict. God "raised Him from the dead and made Him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20, 21).

The reign of the Messiah, as Lord will end in certain victory. "For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in subjection under his feet." When the Son has completed the task, under the authority bestowed upon Him by the Father, He will deliver the kingdom to the Father again. "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power." This will not be the end of the kingdom of heaven, for there will always be a rule of God. It will only end the Christocracy, the rule of God's anointed, a reign created and inaugurated for a certain purpose. "When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be everything to everyone" (1 Cor. 15:28).

While the ultimate victory of virtue over vice, and of truth over error, is assured, those who enlisted under the banner of Jesus can help or hinder, by their attitude toward Him and each other. The latter will generally be affected by the former. When the citizens of the kingdom work together in harmony, the fortunes of the kingdom will be advanced in their area. When we appropriate and squander the resources available for conquest of the enemy in tribal warfare, the Cause of the Prince of Peace will suffer reverse and reproach. For this

reason "a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" is described as one in which each person "with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, (is) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

Lack of harmony among the disciples of Christ stems from lack of honoring His Lordship over our lives. Unified purpose in promoting the interests of the kingdom, is not something which we can take or leave. It is an order of the king, a command of the Lord. We either do what we are told or defy divine orders. It is not a question of whether we should maintain unity or not, as soldiers in His army, but rather whether we will obey or disobey the mandate of our Sovereign.

Our immediate concern is the schismatic state of the disciples of Christ, and that concern is deepened by a firm conviction that it exists contrary to the purpose of the Lord. He has been coronated in heaven by the Father but has not been coronated in our hearts. We are divided from one another because we have not drawn closer to Him. Our opinions and speculations have been more important than His words. We have spent more time debating about His nature than in imitating His life.

If we are to undo our divisive state we must begin with a mutual recognition of the common ground upon which all may stand to survey the prospect for coming closer together. This can only be found in an acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord. We are separated because we had the will to divide, we can only unite when all bow to a superior will which will lead us together. That Jesus is able to overcome barriers, remove obstacles and unite those who previously were at enmity with each other has been clearly demonstrated in what He did with Jews and Gentiles.

"For He is our peace who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14). Certainly our sectarian chasm is no wider than the one which Jesus spanned by His blood. Lord, show us the way!—*published posthumously*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

I have fully recovered from my allergic reaction and am back to running two miles most mornings, which I enjoy. I enjoy all of life, which I view as a banquet set before me, especially when Ouida can go places with me, as she did recently when I spoke at both a Church of Christ and a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arkansas City, Ks. We had a joint meeting at the Christian Church on our common heritage. I told them that the essence of the Stone-Campbell plea was that Christians can unite upon the fundamentals of the faith while allowing liberty in matters of opinion, and that it is this that we must recover in our own time. Also last month I was with the Dayspring Church of Christ in Edmund, Ok., one of our more progressive churches that I have long desired to visit. They asked me to talk about the history of Biblical interpretation, which was part of a series, which I tried to make interesting. They are nine years old, are growing in love as well as in numbers, and are really out front, and have never had a hired minister! But they do not lack for dynamic leadership. I told them that they were the kind of Church of Christ I have been hoping for and working for all these years. Having already put sectarianism behind them, they say they are ready to reconsider the ministry of women in the church. The Sunday I was there they had an "Anointing of Elders" service. They are what you can call avant garde, which is the greatest need in Churches of Christ today, churches that will, like Jesus did, move on out ahead and Lake the lead.

Stephen Bilak, one of our missionaries to the Slavic world, tells in his *Ukrainian Messenger* (published by the Minter Lane Church of Christ in Abilene, Tx.) how the Russian people last year celebrated the 1,000th birthday anniversary of the Orthodox Church, and that they are this year honoring the 175th birthday anniversary of Taras Shevcheno, a great poet whom Bilak describes as "a Prophet, Moses of Ukraine, Apostle of Truth" and as "Just a Christian." In his day Shevcheno opposed idol worship, traditions of men, and the corruption of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. He pled for a restoration of New Testament Christianity and claimed to be "just a Christian." Bilak quotes one Russian Christian leader as saying that Shevcheno saved Russia's faith from dying out. It is heartening to see our people recognize the contributions of the church at large.

This past summer more than 3,000 evangelical leaders from 170 countries met in Manila for the Lausanne II conference. Poverty was a pervasive theme. The Manila Manifesto, the statement that came out of the conference, recognizes that evangelism and social action are inseparable ministries. The Manila meeting also recognized that many peoples of the world are inaccessible to traditional missionary approaches. We can enter some countries only as tentmakers, that is, as cross-cultural lay witnesses with a secular identity, it concluded.

The Sycamore Church of Christ in Cookeville, Tn. is launching a "One Nation Under God" campaign for the summer of 1991, which will be a coordinated effort of Churches of Christ all across the nation. It will begin with a full page ad in *Reader's Digest* and include a week-long, nation wide TV series, and a mailing to every household in the U.S. Simultaneous with all this will be gospel meetings across the country. 14,000 congregations are being asked to participate. What a blessing such an effort could be if it were done in a non-sectarian way.

At least one TV evangelist has commented on the Jim Bakker court trial. Billy Graham issued the statement that he was saddened by Bakker's personal tragedy and that he felt sorry for his many sincere supporters who have been hurt. He also said that Christians must get away from the "celebrity syndrome" and get their eyes *off* personalities and onto Jesus Christ, who as the "bright and morning star" is the only star we need.

The St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Sewickley, Pa. is a special kind of Episcopal church. while it uses the traditional liturgy and kneeing stools, it has become a center for evangelistic outreach with increasing numbers accepting Christ. It has quadrupled in size since 1971 with 1200 in attendance. Its pastor, John Guest, has given the church such a heart for evangelism that it has sent him out on a national crusade evangelistic ministry. Guest, whose star has begun to rise, is described as "the thinking man's evangelist."

I also addressed my own church here in Denton recently on the essence of religion as set forth in Micah 6:8. I noted that each of the three values in that passage are explained by the other two. "To do justly" means "to love tenderly" and "to walk humbly with God." "To love tenderly" means "to do justly" and "to walk humbly with God." "To walk humbly with God" means to serve others in terms of doing justly and loving tenderly. All three add up to what Jesus teaches us in the story of the Good Samaritan. I also pointed out that we have a Good Samaritan in the Old Testament in the person of Ebed-Melech, a black man who saved the prophet Jeremiah's life by pulling him out of a muddy well. Ebed-Melech must have "loved tenderly" because he not only pulled the prophet to safety but also provided him with rags to put under his arms to soften the tension of the rope. A black man pulling a white man out of a well is a good illustration, I noted, of what it means to do justly, love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God.

The Christian Science Monitor recently had an editorial on "Give Your Spouse Mental Elbowroom!" It noted that many things go into the making of a happy marriage -mutual trust, love and affection, honesty, faithfulness, and a sense of humor. Then it said, "But one of the most important gifts we can give our spouse is mental elbowroom -the mental room for the other person to be his or her own unique self, without constant judgment from us." Indeed, mental elbow-room would not only be a loving gift in a marriage but in all the relations of life and especially in the church. Another piece in the *Monitor* called for "Loving the Unlovable"

in which the point was made that we can love those that God loves. When we realize that God loves the unlovable and find reasons why God loves them, then we too can love the unlovable, the article observed.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I appreciate your causing us to examine and re-examine what we believe and are being taught. Since "understanding" is a major factor in the parable of the sower, I will say with John, "This is the true God and eternal life." — *II. Parsley, Greenville, Tx.*

Your piece on the church as a halfway house is excellent. It is seemingly very difficult for many church members to take seriously our lord's parable about the Publican and the Pharisee. One of my greatest problems with my early years in the Church of Christ resulted from the fact that so many of the "pillars of the church" seemed to be more like the Pharisee than like the Publican. — *Comer Shacklett, Westfield, NJ*

I have lived more than half of my life in legalism and 12 years in grace. I have been cynical about the Church of Christ, but you say to me: Stand firm in the faith; you can do it, and it is worth the effort. IL is sad that so many give up the faith. God realizes that we need in each generation men of faith who will encourage us and show us the way. —*Forrest Smith, Lubbock, Tx.*

I appreciated your article concerning black churches. I hope and pray we can do more to break down racism and bring about a closer relationship between Christians and churches of all races. — *Furman Kearly, Editor, Gospel Advocate, Nashville, Tn.*

Your paper has influenced my thinking more than anything else that I have ever read except the Bible. I used to be so sectarian that it frightens me to think of it. I probably have a long way to go, though, before I will be where the Lord wants me to be. My biggest problem now is anger towards the "Church of Christ." I feel I have been lied to most of my life. But I

know that I must forgive and move on and make a contribution in God's kingdom. With God's grace I will do this. I hope to continue the kind of work you are doing when it comes my turn. *— a missionary in Europe*

I will be eternally grateful to you and for Carl Ketcherside for the encouragement and inspiration I have received during this lifetime. If we are within shouting distance in heaven I will shout my gratitude! *—C. M. Weinsheimer, Doylestown, Oh.*

I had lunch and a good visit with Carl Ketcherside when he spoke at our chapel shortly before his death. He was well received by the students. I appreciate so much both your magnificent contribution to this ministry of healing and our continuing friend-ship through these years. —L. *Hieronymus, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, II.*

At one moment our son called to tell us he had received a promotion. At the next moment my wife goes to the mailbox where she found both *The Spiritual Sword* and *Restoration Review.* She commented that the sword on one cover and the three crosses on the other speak louder than words. I asked her if the mailbox was smoldering, and she said no but that the sword had turned green! Isn't the Christian life exciting! —Joe *Bain, Decatur, AL*

We are raising money for the restoration of the Campbell mansion. One couple gave $400,000. The Church of Christ is giving $150,000 and the Independent Christian Churches a like *amount.—James Carty, Bethany College, Bethany, Va. 26032*

(If you have it in your heart to make a donation to the complete renovation of the old home where Alexander Campbell lived for a half century, which is very expensive, you can send your check to Jim Carty at the address given. — *Ed.)*

I look forward to these next years as President of the World Convention of Churches of Christ and trust that you will be among those who will be helpful in making this a significant period for the Campbell-Stone movement. — *Harold R. Watkins, Indianapolis, In.*

(For some years I have served on the executive committee of the WCCC. It is the one convention that serves as a kind of umbrella gathering for all segments of our people. Harold Watkins is the new president. I was pleased to see him take office at the WCCC's gathering in New Zealand last year. He has a great spirit and is eager for Churches of Christ to become more involved in the WCCC, which is a world fellowship gathering for us all. — *Ed.*

The Hope of the Believer . . .

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BOOK NOTES

We are pleased to announce that our latest bound volume of this journal (1987-88) will be ready to mail before year's end. It will be beautifully bound in hardcover with dustjacket, with an introduction and table of contents, and under the title *The Sense of Scripture: Studies in Interpretation.* We are able to hold the price at $12.50, which is the price of the previous bound volume, *Adventures of the Early Church,* (1985-86).This makes seven bound volumes now available, from 1977-88, and if you order them all the special price is $65.00, postpaid. A few of these are in short supply.

We also have loose copies available back to the 1960's, but not in complete sets. If you select the numbers, they are 50 cents each, postpaid, as available. We will send you 18 back copies1 selected at random by us, for only $4.00, postpaid.

Our most popular special offer is a free copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement* by Leroy Garrett when you send us eight subs to this journal, new or renewal, including your own. It is also our favorite offer in that it introduces the paper to many new readers, which is the object of the offer.

Special offers or no, we urge you to help us place this paper in the hands of more people who maybe blessed by it. We figure we have but a few more years at best, and we would like to make the most of the short time that is left. You can subscribe for others (and yourself) for only $3.00 per year per name in clubs of four or more.

Wilbur S. Johnson, who works among Christian Churches and others, has written a book (self-published) that Ouida and I have been reading with appreciation. It is entitled *Faith Alive in Heart, Home* and *Church,* and once you read it you will agree that it is well named. We can send you a copy for only $5.00 postpaid.

For many years I have seen references to Harold Bell Wright's *The Shepherd of the Hills,* especially in British sources, but I was never able to find it in print. I have at last found its American publisher and we are adding it to the books we offer our readers. It is a touching story of the simple life and simple values in the Ozark hill country. $10.50 postpaid.

With a touch of humor Michael Green says the Cross is too important to be left with theologians as he refers to his *The Empty Cross of Jesus,* but he is more than serious when he writes of the Cross as the heart of the Good News. Always worth reading, Green in this book shows what the Cross means to ordinary people by explaining why Jesus had to die. $7.95 postpaid.

Jack Cottrell of Cincinnati Bible Semi-nary has written a splendid little volume on *Baptism: A Biblical Study.* It is ideal for either individual or class study. $6.75 postpaid.

Bill and Judy Norris, who are not really old enough to be writing a book on *What The Bible Says About Growing Old,* have nonetheless done so, and they are a pair that does all things well. You will delight in their practical suggestions. $13.95 postpaid.

We continue to mention Edward Fudge's *The Fire That Consumes* because it has proved to be such a challenging book, one that questions traditional views about hell and endless punishment. The price is $19.95 postpaid.

Our readers have responded well to Faith Martin's *Call Me Blessed,* which is an enlightening overview of woman's role in the Bible, which she believes has been unduly influenced by our male-dominated culture. It is both a gentle and thoughtful study. $8.95 postpaid.

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